

MARYLAND Suffrage News

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DEDICATION.

To the poor women without homes, to the little toilers who should be in the schools and playgrounds, to the white slaves in their tragic bondage, and to the children who die, these pages are dedicated! May every woman who is not too idle to have a thought, or too vain to have a soul, or too rich in gold to have a heart, join in the great struggle for women's freedom!

Purity, Liberty, Justice—these we must work for!

CAMOUFLAGE

THE wily politician is always up to date in his methods. Concealment of his real purpose and motives is essential. Today he adopts the art of camouflage, and lo and behold, he fights against democracy at home as successfully as he demands that our army fight for it abroad.

It looks as though the time limit clause had been definitely fastened onto the suffrage amendment. Already the prohibition amendment has been thus burdened in spite of protest and the manifest unconstitutionality of the provision. The whole situation is a wonderful example of how the political game is worked in Congress. With the time limit clause in effect, our Congressmen can ride two horses with apparent safety, and how they love to be able to do that! To a suffragist, they may claim that they are for suffrage and will vote for the amendment. To an anti, they may explain with great sincerity that the time limit clause will either prevent ratification or render the whole amendment void.

So far only one member of Congress appears to have both perspicacity and courage enough to point out the danger. Senator Borah, lawyer and suffragist, while speaking to the prohibition amendment, stated: "We have no such power as to say the amendment shall be ratified within seven years after being submitted to the States by Congress. It is either to be submitted to the States or not to be submitted at all. If it goes to the States, they can ratify it whenever they desire."

In this connection it is interesting to note that Senator Brandegee of Connecticut, enemy of suffrage, prohibition, child-labor laws and of everything else that seems to us to make for social progress, in order to make assurance doubly sure, has already proposed an amendment to the amending clause of the Constitution to the effect that all amendments to the Constitution shall be ratified by the *electorate* direct within *eight* years after submission. The Honorable Senator is surely some artist in camouflage. If such an amendment is proposed by Congress and subsequently ratified by the States, what becomes of the suffrage and prohibition amendments? If the Brandegee amendment should be ratified by three-fourths of the States before that number of States have ratified the suffrage and prohibition amendments, as in all human probability would be the case, the action of so many of the States as had ratified the latter amendments would go for naught, because such ratification would have been by the State Legislatures, as at present provided, and not by the electorate direct, as would be called for by the Brandegee amendment. Nor would the trouble stop there. The time limit in the Brandegee amendment is eight years, whereas the time limit of the suffrage and prohibition amendments would be six or seven years. This discrepancy would render the two amendments void, and the entire fight would have to be gone over again in Congress. We would have to start in at the beginning once more, for manifestly if the Constitution as amended expressly provided that amendments must be ratified within eight years, an amendment which required ratification in a

longer or shorter period would be in direct conflict and of necessity would fail.

Thus does the wily politician practice his art of camouflage.

"HIC JACET"

"HERE lies the bones of free speech." Thus shall read the inscription on the first grave resulting from our war for democracy abroad. Gone is the right of free speech, but we hope not forever.

What is this thing called democracy for which we are fighting? What is left of democracy if we take away personal liberty? What is left of personal liberty if we take away free speech?

Free speech is the keystone of the arch of personal liberty, and the arch of personal liberty supports the whole structure of any true democracy. Without free speech there can exist no true democracy, no matter how democratic may appear the forms under which our Government may be administered.

Why this new fear of that right of free speech for which we and our forbears fought for centuries? Why this acquiescence in the present policy of suppression which a year ago would have seemed impossible? Free speech has never meant irresponsible speech. It does not mean it today. A man has always been held civilly and criminally liable for his words. He may be so held today. Why is it, then, that the right of free speech must be abridged or denied? What is the crime, the incitement to which is so terrifying that we must now empower our police officials to prevent it instead of relying upon our courts to punish it as formerly?

Carefully we have gone over the story of each case of suppression which has come to our notice. We have found no words inciting to any crime known to law, but there has always been one common factor: the victim has dared to think, and to think differently from those in power.

Have we then created a new crime while we have been warring for democracy—the crime of thinking? Can democracy exist only at the expense of intelligence? Must we all stop thinking or must we all think alike and then only as and when ordered by someone "higher up?"

We have always assumed as axiomatic that a successful democracy presupposed an intelligent democracy, and that intelligence, in turn, presupposed thought and the right to think, and having thought, the right to express those thoughts.

The pathetic side to this policy of suppression is involved in the childish notion that to suppress the expression of thought is to suppress thought itself. Despots have always proceeded on that theory and have always signally failed, as we too will fail if we persist in our present course. If the truth cannot stand up against contradiction, there is no value in truth, and if we cannot think and give expression to what we think, how are we to arrive at truth?

Even from the standpoint of those who seek to crush free speech, the present policy of suppression is unwise, even unsafe. They may stop thinking in the open, but they will never stop it in the dark and hidden places, and there it will smoulder and smoulder, spreading through unknown channels to unsuspected parts, ready to burst forth at a given instant not into free speech, but into free action. There will be no stopping at incitement to crime; there will be crime itself. Free speech has always been a safety valve, and sitting on the safety valve is a highly dangerous performance not alone for the sitter, but for the rest of us as well who happen to be in the near neighborhood.

It seems to us as though we needed a more free speech today than ever before. During and after this war, a process of readjustment should be going on smoothly and peacefully. We should even dig deep and look carefully to our very foundations. Changes are demanded and will come no matter what any of us or any group of us may think as to their desirability. By permitting free speech a wide range, these changes will come gradually without upheaval. If free speech is suppressed, the changes will come as earthquakes with the usual fatalities. It is up to the Government and those in power to make their choice. The writing is on the wall.